2: Durham B-5 (ca. 1910)1928 EG1 Albania EG1

and gradually reforming matters, were working towards punishing them in the same manner as theft within the tribe.

The fights between Montenegro and the Turks were usually brought about in this manner. The Montenegrins raided the Turkish borders, especially Herzegovina, till the Turks sent punitive expeditions. All sheep-stealers were considered heroes.

So far as my own experience goes I never had a thing stolen from me when among the Albanian tribes; they dealt honestly by me always.

FINES FOR OTHER MATTERS

In the case of rape the injured family may take blood; or it may compound for peace and accept about £30. The father of an illegitimate child must pay for its keep.

For killing a sheep or cattle a fine of about £2 to £3 per head.

For cutting wood in the forest of others, £2.

For stealing fruit, etc., according to value.

For putting a beast to graze on someone else's pasture, £2.

For putting beasts to graze on your own tribal pasture before the right season, £4.

(The sums given are only approximately taken at the then value of piastres.)

INHERITANCE

No land may be sold or bequeathed to a member of another tribe or any outsider.

The possessor of land can only sell it to his nearest male relative on his father's side.

Women cannot inherit land.

The house and such land as belongs to it is inherited by all a man's sons equally. As a matter of practice they continue living in it, and the eldest son is "zoti i shpis" (house-lord). I have seen a young man of twenty-eight years ordering his old uncles about in most peremptory manner. Expressing surprise at the way they obeyed, I was told: "They must—God has made him house-lord."

Failing sons, the property belongs equally to the nearest male relatives of the deceased, who usually would be his brothers. The eldest is then house-lord.

Should a man leave a wife who has had no children, she is of no account, and must leave the house and return to her father's house. Should she have a son under the age of fifteen she remains to mind the house till he inherits it. Till he is fifteen a guardian takes charge of his affairs. At fifteen he is of age and can carry arms. If the widow has

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the body was laid in it, in order to prevent any devil lurking there to seize the dead.

I remember waiting by the tiny grave dug for a child at Thethi Shala in the graveyard. Someone tripped over the long protruding handle of the shovel and dislodged it. The old gravedigger dashed forward and replaced it at once, and drew it out only as the little corpse was lowered. The Franciscan, an Albanian, who stood by the graveside, acquiesced. "It is the custom," he said when questioned. Possibly, like the rest of us, he could not keep demons at bay unaided.

Iron keeps off all spirits, good and bad, it appears; for no knife must touch the fowl's breast-bone or sheep's blade-bone in which the Albanian and Montenegrin soothsayers read the future. No one can tell you why; but everyone knows it would be the height of folly to try to read a bone that has been cleaned with a knife—it would not tell the truth.

Colonel Aubrey Herbert, that friend of the Turks and Albanians, whose untimely death has left an unfillable gap, gave me a curious instance of the belief in the magic of iron. During the Balkan war of 1913 the Turkish general, Djavid Pasha, retreated with what was left of his army into South Albania, where "he occupied the house of a friend of mine. The tide of war was running fiercely against the Turks and the general wanted to consult the spirits. The family carpenter was ordered to make a three-legged table without any nails in it—'for the spirits hate metal,' said Djavid. The young Turks invoked the spirit of Nazim Pasha, who had been shot by Enver and his friends. . . . When no answer came, the absent ghost of Nazim was cursed for refusing to give information."

Even the absence of iron could not induce the spirit of the murdered man to advise his murderers.

6. Hair. Some Beliefs and Customs connected with it

In many lands much mystery surrounds hair, that strange substance that grows continually from youth to age; which is part of the person, but can be cut off without pain and is, therefore, the most convenient substitute or symbol for the whole person.

By means of hair spells can be wrought even in an electric-lighted European capital. Draga Mashin, the mistress of the luckless young King Alexander Obrenovitch, forced him to marry her and make her queen by clipping some of her hair in little bits and mixing it with appropriate spells in his food. Having thus eaten a portion of her, he was hopelessly in her power. At least, so we were assured by one of

7: Amery G-5 (1943-44) 1948 EG1 Albania EG1

was faultless and, with a sure understanding of the British character, he brought us whisky, for which he had combed Tirana, and excellent cigarettes made of Albanian tobaccos specially blended to his taste. At lunch the talk skimmed lightly from anecdotes to mutual acquaintances in the capitals of Europe; and, with the added charms of feminine company, the barriers of nationality and politics were seemingly dissolved by the pleasures of social intercourse. Such a gathering of Albanian landowners and British officers must have appeared to a Partisan observer as proof positive of the sinister machinations of international reaction. The thought passed through my mind, but I cannot pretend that it seriously diminished my enjoyment of the occasion.

When we had eaten, Ihsan took the other guests apart, and we remained alone with Nureddin. He told us at once that he had just been invited by the Germans either to assume the Premiership or to enter the Council of Regency. His natural instinct had been to decline the thankless task, but he would accept the responsibility if he could thereby assist the Allied cause. The idea of having a friend as head of the "collaborationist" government was certainly tempting and might offer opportunities for attacking the Germans from within. Nevertheless, we strongly advised Nureddin to refuse an invitation which might lead other Albanian Nationalists to line up with the Germans in an anti-Communist front. We then expounded our general policy, condemning collaboration in any form and stressing that we could only support those Albanians who fought against the Germans. We spoke, too, of our concern that the Ballists should be fighting with the enemy against the Partisans and appealed to Nureddin to use his influence with their leaders to bring about a change of policy. He told us that the Ballists would not only cease fighting the Partisans but would gladly co-operate with them against the Germans if only Enver Hoja would abandon his attempt to impose a social revolution on Albania by force. If we could restrain the L.N.C. he was confident that the Ballists would prove amenable; if we could not, then they must fight as best they could, for their lives and property were at stake.